DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 837 TM 024 439

TITLE	Report on Grade Level Retention of Texas Students, 1992-93 and 1993-94.
INSTITUTION	Texas Education Agency, Austin.
REPORT NO	GE5-601-12
PUB DATE	Feb 95
NOTE	33p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701-1494 Publication Number GE5-601-12).
PUB TYPE	Statistical Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Failure; Age Differences; *Blacks; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethnicity; *Grade Repetition; *Hispanic Americans; Minority Groups; *Racial Differences; *Sex Differences; State Legislation; Student Promotion; Whites
IDENTIFIERS	*Texas

ABSTRACT

A legislative mandate requires the Texas Central Education Agency to submit a report each odd-numbered year that includes data collected on students retained in grade, including the reason for retention. This report presents current summary data on the retention rates of Texas students by grade level, age, gender, and ethnicity for 1992-93; year-end summary data; and an overview of state policy regarding retention and promotion. Some preliminary data for the 1993-94 year are also presented. Research on the effects of grade level retention has consistently shown that having students repeat a grade or delaying entry to kindergarten or first grade when the child is of the appropriate chronological age does not help students academically or personally. In 1992-93 an estimated 5% of Texas public school students were retained, but about 7% of Hispanic and African American students were retained. Hispanic students represented 47% of all students retained in 1992-93. The highest retentions continued to be in the ninth grade, and males continued to outnumber females in retentions. Overage students represented 16.2% of regular education students, but were 26.9% of regular education students who were retained. (Contains 1 table, 12 charts, and 8 references.) (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 391 837

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
LINDA KEMP
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Report on

Grade Level Retention

of Texas Students 1992-93 and 1993-94

Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas

February 1995

IM024439

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Material in this publication is not copyrighted and may be reproduced. The Texas Education Agency would appreciate credit for the material used and a copy of the reprint.

Additional copies of this document may be obtained for $1.00 per copy by contacting:

Publications Distribution Division
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494
(512) 463-9744

Refer to Publication Number GE5-601-12.
Additional information about Texas grade level retention data may be obtained by contacting the Texas Education Agency Policy Analysis and Evaluation Division at (512) 463-9701.

Report on Grade Level Retention of Texas Students 1992-93 and 1993-94

Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas
February 1995

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY 1701 NORTH CONGRESS AVENUE • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-1494 • (512) 463-9734

February 1995

The Honorable George W. Bush, Governor of Texas
The Honorable Bob Bullock, Lieutenant Governor of Texas
The Honorable Pete Laney, Speaker of the House

The *Texas Education Code*, §11.204(d), Student Retention Information, requires the Central Education Agency to submit a report each odd-numbered year that includes data collected on students retained, including the reason for retention. The *Report on Grade Level Retention of Texas Students 1992-93 and 1993-94* presents current summary data on the retention rate of students by grade level, age, gender, and ethnicity. Data on year-end promotion/retention status of students for the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years are presented. An additional state-level analysis of grade-level retention is produced for 1992-93 by analyzing enrollment data for the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years. The report also provides an overview of state policy pertaining to the retention and promotion of students.

Grade level retention is the practice of having a student repeat a given grade, or delaying a child's entry to kindergarten or first grade who is of the appropriate chronological age. Research on the effects of grade level retention on students has consistently shown that retention does not help students either academically or personally. In 1992-93, an estimated five percent of Texas public school students were retained. Seven percent of Hispanic and African American students were retained. The highest retentions continue to be in the ninth grade, and males outnumber females in retentions.

The State Board of Education has continued over the last biennium to encourage instructional and organizational strategies that define alternatives to student retention. The Policy Statement on Early Childhood and Elementary Education advocates instructional practices, organizational arrangements, and staffing patterns to prevent early school failure and assure that no student is retained. *First Impressions*, the 1994 report of the board Task Force on Early Childhood and Elementary Education, also reflected this emphasis on alternatives to retention and presented a series of recommendations for the legislature, board, Texas Education Agency, regional education service centers, school districts, and campuses.

State-funded optional extended year programs implemented during the biennium allow school districts to pilot extended instructional programs to eliminate retentions in the first and second grade. As you know, SBOE legislative recommendations for the 74th Legislature include the continued provision for state funded extended year programs for students in danger of being retained.

Each of these initiatives specifically addresses concerns related to grade level retention illustrated by the information in this report. The broader focus of the board and agency on student achievement, aimed at eliminating student failure and thereby eliminating retention, is seen in major

initiatives in every area. The integrated accountability system is first and foremost designed to improve student performance. The focus of the elementary, middle, and high school networks is improved student achievement through local staff development; retention is particularly an issue for the elementary school network. Teacher and administrator proficiencies adopted by the board describe the skills and knowledge educators need in a learner-centered environment; Centers for Professional Development and Technology are providing innovative approaches to acquiring these skills and knowledge. Regional Education Service Centers have also redirected their efforts from support of administrative functions to support of student achievement. Even the alignment and clarification of the essential elements is being conducted to assure students, teachers, and parents clearly understand what is expected so that students can succeed.

The Central Education Agency is pleased to submit the *Report on Grade Level Retention of Texas Students 1992-93 and 1993-94*.

Respectfully submitted,

Lionel R. Meno
Commissioner of Education

State Board of Education
(State Board for Vocational Education)

Jack Christie, D.C., Houston
Chairman of the State Board of Education
District 6

Monte Hasie, Lubbock
Vice Chairman of the State Board of Education
District 15

Mary Helen Berlanga, Corpus Christi
Secretary of the State Board of Education
District 2

Alma A. Allen, Ed.D., Houston
District 4

Donna Ballard, The Woodlands
District 8

Carolyn Honea Crawford, Ph.D., Beaumont
District 7

Will D. Davis, Austin
District 10

Geraldine Miller, Dallas
District 12

Rene Nuñez, El Paso
District 1

Robert H. Offutt, D.D.S., San Antonio
District 5

Diane Patrick, Arlington
District 11

Rosie Sorrells, Ed.D., Dallas
District 13

Esteban Sosa, San Antonio
District 3

Randy Stevenson, Tyler
District 9

Richard Watson, Gorman
District 14

Lionel R. Meno
Commissioner of Education
(Executive Officer of the State Board of Education)

Project Staff

Criss Cloudt
Executive Associate Commissioner
Office of Policy Planning and Information Management

Nancy Stevens
Director
Policy Analysis and Evaluation Division

Ester Calderón Regalado
Project Director

Sedra G. Spano
Research and Writing

Esteban U. Reyes
Gema Barkanic
Systems Analysts

Vicky A. Killgore
Graphics, Layout, and Design

Office of Policy Planning and Information Management
Maureen Moore Scheevel

Performance Reporting Division
Cathy Long
John Haetinger

Accelerated Instruction Division/
Instructional Services Unit
Darlene Yañez
Avis Wallace

Report on Grade Level Retention of Texas Students 1992-93 and 1993-94

Executive Summary

Grade level retention is the practice of having a student repeat a given grade, or delaying a child's entry to kindergarten or first grade who is of the appropriate chronological age. Research on the effects of grade level retention on students has consistently shown that retention does not help students either academically or personally. Over the past 10 years, Texas state laws and State Board of Education rules pertaining to the retention and promotion of students moved from establishing consistent promotion policies to recognizing repercussions of retention to advocating alternatives for assisting students to funding retention reduction programs.

The Texas Education Agency collects and reports information relating to grade level retention of students. This report presents state level analyses of 1992-93 grade level retention. Retention status reported by districts at the end of the 1992-93 school year is adjusted to reflect actual grade-level enrollment of students in the 1993-94 school year. End-of-year retention status and adjusted retention totals for school years 1991-92 and 1992-93 are compared. Preliminary end-of-year retention status data for the 1993-94 school year are also presented.

In 1992-93, 174,133 students were retained in grade. This adjusted retention estimate results in a statewide retention rate of 5.1 percent. Grade 9 continues to produce the greatest number of students retained and highest retention rate. The grade 9 retention rate for 1992-93 was 18.7 percent. Among the elementary grades, number of retentions and the retention rate in grade 1 were the largest, with a 7.9 percent retention rate. In general, students are retained at higher rates in the high school grades than elementary or middle grades.

Hispanic students represent 47.0 percent of all students retained in 1992-93. The retention rate for Hispanic students was 7.1 percent, the highest of any ethnic group. The retention rate of African American students was almost as high as that of Hispanics, with 7.0 percent retained. Although 30.5 percent of all students retained were white, the resulting retention rate was only 3.2 percent. Larger numbers of Hispanic students were retained at each grade level except kindergarten than students from any other ethnic group.

About 60.5 percent of students retained in 1992-93 were males. Males make up the larger percent of students retained for all grades, all ethnic groups, and for students in special education programs. Overage students represent 16.2 percent of all regular education students, but 26.9 percent of regular education students who are retained.

Introduction

Texas Education Code §11.204 requires the Central Education Agency to submit a report to the legislature each odd numbered year summarizing data collected relating to grade level retention of students. This document is the second such report.

Grade level retention is the practice of having a student repeat a given grade, or delaying a child's entry to kindergarten or first grade who is of the appropriate chronological age. Grade level retention has been practiced since schools were first organized into specific grade levels. The intent of grade level retention was to give a student who was failing extra time to master the academic tasks of his or her current grade level before moving to the next level.

Research on the effects of grade level retention on students, however, has consistently shown that retention does not help students either academically or personally. Even more disturbing is the finding that, on the average, retained students are actually worse off than their peers who were promoted both in terms of academic achievement and personal adjustment. State defined criteria for the identification of students at risk of dropping out includes students who were retained in a grade level at least once in grades 1 - 6.

The data provided in this report will allow the legislature, State Board of Education, and Texas Education Agency to identify the extent of grade level retention as a basis for reviewing state policies related to promotion and retention.

Policy Overview

Over the past 10 years, Texas state laws and State Board of Education rules pertaining to the retention and promotion of students moved from establishing consistent promotion policies to recognizing repercussions of retention to advocating alternatives for assisting students to funding retention reduction programs. Texas Education Code (TEC) §21.721, *Grade Requirement for Advancement or Course Credit*, enacted in 1984, stated that districts may not grant social promotions. Students may be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement. State Board of Education rules implementing that law were enacted the following year. Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 19, Chapter 75, Subchapter H, *Promotions and Alternatives to Social Promotion*, outlines the grading procedures districts are to use and guidelines for promotion. It is important to note that the rules explicitly state that campus assignment shall be at the discretion of the district in the event that a student fails some but not all courses in the eighth grade. The rules also state that student academic achievement shall be based on degree of mastery of the essential elements, and that students shall be promoted from one grade to the next only on the basis of

academic achievement. Districts are given direction, such as no student can repeat the same grade more than once or more than two grades during the elementary years.

In 1988, TEC §21.557, *Compensatory and Remedial Instruction*, was expanded by defining students in grades 7 - 12 who are at risk of dropping out of school and requiring districts to provide remedial and support programs for these students. The definition of students at risk includes students who were not advanced from one grade level to the next one or more school years.

In 1991, the board rule prohibiting retention of students below the first grade was amended. The amendment states that, with parental consent, a six-year old student who is determined by the school not to be developmentally ready for first grade may be assigned to a grade as deemed appropriate by the school. Such a placement could be in an extra-year program. Extra-year programs, sometimes called pre-first, transitional first, or developmental first grade programs, result in retentions.

Also in 1991, TEC §21.721, *Grade Requirements for Advancement or Course Credit*, was updated to eliminate the prohibition on advancing a student with a grade average below 70. It also allows school districts to adopt policies regarding how students are to be advanced from one grade level to the next. Local policies must take into consideration a number of factors when considering the promotion of a student, including: whether the student's yearly grade point average is at least 70, the student's grade in each subject, the student's performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), any extenuating circumstances, the opinion of the student's parents and teachers, or any other factor the district considers important. Before retaining a student in the same grade, districts must consider the following alternatives for assisting the student: extended school day, extended school year, specialized tutorial support, peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, student mentoring, or summer programs.

Also in 1991, TEC §11.204, *Student Retention Information*, was added. This is the provision that requires the Central Education Agency to collect and report information relating to grade level retention of students.

A retention reduction grant program supported by the State Board of Education was enacted as TEC §21.562 in 1993. A $5 million appropriation allowed 54 Texas school districts to pilot extended instructional programs to eliminate retentions in the first grade during the 1992-93 school year. The Retention Reduction Grants provide school districts and campuses with alternatives to retention such as lengthening the school day, week, or year. This enables the recipient schools and districts to provide additional instruction to students who need extra assistance to master the essential elements of the state curriculum in the first grade. The pilots can be extended to the

second grade in 1994-95. Agency staff will provide technical support throughout the two-year pilot period to assist campuses in maintaining and refining their programs.

Also in 1993, TEC §21.563, *Optional Extended Year Program*, was added to allow a school district not receiving a grant as part of §21.562 to apply to the commissioner of education for approval to provide an extended year program for a period not to exceed 45 days for students in kindergarten - grade 8 who would otherwise be retained. To fund such programs, with the commissioner's approval, a school district may reduce by five the number of instructional days for students during the regular school year.

Methodology

The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) is used to collect data on grade level retention of students in Texas. Retention data were collected for the first time in October 1992 for retentions at the end of the 1991-92 school year. That year, school districts reported the actual number of students who repeated a grade during the 1992-93 school year. Students who were new to the districts in October 1992 and for whom end-of-year retention status for the prior year was unknown were not included in the 1991-92 analysis.

To determine the validity of the first collection of retention data, alternative analyses of grade level retentions for the 1991-92 school year were conducted. Retention status reported by districts at the end of the 1991-92 school year was adjusted to reflect actual grade level enrollment of students in the 1992-93 school year. In comparison to the adjusted total, retentions reported by school districts under-represented the extent of grade retention by over 44,000 students. Retentions may have been underreported due to student mobility between campuses over the summer as well as to problems in the first year of data reporting.

Two years of retention data have been collected from school districts since the 1991-92 retention information was reported. Retention data reported for the 1992-93 school year were collected at the end of the school year in June 1993 when the students were still on campus and their retention status was known to the district. The following year, in June 1994, the third collection of retention data became available for the 1993-94 school year.

Preliminary Retention Data

Preliminary retention numbers and rates are calculated from the end-of-year retention status information. Separate formulas are used for calculating retention rates for kindergarten - grade 8 and for grades 9 - 12 because the criteria and definitions for retention differ for elementary/middle grades and high school grades. The end-of-year status of each student is identified in the retention data collection and the formulas for retention rates are based on these status codes. Total students in the formulas below do not include students who left the district before the end of the school year or whose retention status was pending at the end of the year. A pending status is assigned to students who will be attending summer school to make up deficiencies that might otherwise result in retention.

Kindergarten - Grade 8

Retained students includes students in the following categories.
- Retained in the same grade
- Promoted from a transitional program to a regular classroom setting in the same grade

Total students includes students in the following categories.
- Promoted to the next grade
- Retained in the same grade
- Placed in the next grade
- Placed in a transitional program
- Promoted from a transitional program to a regular classroom setting in the same grade

Grades 9 - 12

Retained students includes students in the following category.
- Not advanced to the next grade

Total students includes students in the following categories.
- Not advanced to the next grade
- Advanced to the next grade
- Graduated
- Obtained General Educational Development (GED) certificate
- Met all graduation requirements but did not pass exit-level Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test

The retention rate is calculated by dividing total retentions by total students. The end-of-year status information provides district and school level information on the number of retentions and retention rate. Adjusted estimates of student retention, calculated only at the state level, offer a more thorough analysis of retentions in Texas public schools.

Adjusted Retention Data

Adjusted retention state totals were again produced for 1992-93 by analyzing student enrollment data for the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years. The adjusted number of 1993-94 student retentions cannot be produced until the 1994-95 student enrollment information is available in February 1995.

The 1992-93 adjusted retention information is based on analysis of October enrollment data for school year 1992-93, and the corresponding student retention information provided by school districts at the end of the 1992-93 school year. Information from these sources is combined with the October enrollment data for the following school year, 1993-94. School grade reported for the second year is the primary indicator of whether a student was retained. Total retentions used in the adjusted estimates includes students enrolled in the same grade in both the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years who were not reported as retained in the 1992-93 end-of-year status data.

Total students used in the adjusted estimates is defined as the count of students enrolled in both 1992-93 and 1993-94, plus those found only through the end-of-year retention information. All students who left before the end of the school year or whose retention status was pending at the end of the year were excluded from the count of total students. Again, the retention rate is calculated by dividing total retentions by total students.

This report presents state level analyses based on estimates of retentions occurring at the end of the 1992-93 school year adjusted to reflect actual enrollment for the 1993-94 school year. End-of-year retention status reported by districts and adjusted retention totals for school years 1991-92 and 1992-93 are compared. Preliminary end-of-year retention status data for the 1993-94 school year are also presented.

Pages 8 and 9 show the adjusted grade level retentions for the 1992-93 school year by ethnicity.

Grade Level Retention of Students

Number of Students Retained

The total number of Texas public school students reported in kindergarten - grade 12 in 1992-93, including students in special education programs, was 3.4 million.

1992-93 Grade Level Retention by Ethnicity					
Grade	**Ethnicity**	**Total Students**	**Number Retained**	**Percent of Grade Retained**	**Retention Rate**
KG	White	122,813	2,068	53.3%	1.7%
	African American	38,261	461	11.9%	1.2%
	Hispanic	95,997	1,280	33.0%	1.3%
	Other	6,231	68	0.5%	1.1%
	Total	266,669	3,924	100.0%	1.5%
1	White	141,852	8,402	35.3%	5.9%
	African American	42,567	4,309	18.1%	10.1%
	Hispanic	108,137	10,738	45.2%	9.9%
	Other	6,407	322	1.4%	5.0%
	Total	303,695	24,124	100.0%	7.9%
2	White	140,097	2,073	27.5%	1.5%
	African American	39,772	1,377	18.3%	3.5%
	Hispanic	100,990	3,983	52.9%	3.9%
	Other	6,301	93	1.2%	1.5%
	Total	292,024	7,673	100.0%	2.6%
3	White	136,720	1,228	28.2%	0.9%
	African American	39,208	870	20.0%	2.2%
	Hispanic	97,862	2,193	50.3%	2.2%
	Other	6,365	67	1.5%	1.1%
	Total	284,944	4,449	100.0%	1.6%
4	White	137,391	977	28.1%	0.7%
	African American	39,057	686	19.7%	1.8%
	Hispanic	97,927	1,777	51.1%	1.8%
	Other	6,475	40	1.1%	0.6%
	Total	285,242	3,543	100.0%	1.2%
5	White	137,262	1,072	32.9%	0.8%
	African American	38,981	580	17.8%	1.5%
	Hispanic	96,687	1,569	48.2%	1.6%
	Other	6,471	37	1.1%	0.6%
	Total	283,671	3,312	100.0%	1.2%
6	White	137,302	1,872	26.2%	1.4%
	African American	39,921	1,647	23.0%	4.1%
	Hispanic	96,104	3,593	50.2%	3.7%
	Other	6,340	46	0.6%	0.7%
	Total	283,887	7,351	100.0%	2.6%

These numbers do not equal reported totals due to students for whom ethnicity is unknown.

1992-93 Grade Level Retention by Ethnicity *(continued)*					
Grade	**Ethnicity**	**Total Students**	**Number Retained**	**Percent of Grade Retained**	**Retention Rate**
7	White	136,077	2,907	28.1%	2.1%
	African American	40,146	2,280	22.1%	5.7%
	Hispanic	94,148	5,070	49.1%	5.4%
	Other	6,368	78	0.8%	1.2%
	Total	281,081	10,658	100.0%	3.8%
8	White	128,276	2,294	31.4%	1.8%
	African American	36,998	1,347	18.5%	3.6%
	Hispanic	85,938	3,584	49.1%	4.2%
	Other	6,058	73	1.0%	1.2%
	Total	261,170	7,540	100.0%	2.9%
9	White	130,102	13,564	26.6%	10.4%
	African American	40,337	10,617	20.8%	26.3%
	Hispanic	97,359	26,231	51.4%	26.9%
	Other	6,859	618	1.2%	9.0%
	Total	279,734	52,195	100.0%	18.7%
10	White	113,485	6,558	30.9%	5.8%
	African American	28,975	3,964	18.7%	13.7%
	Hispanic	70,545	10,312	48.6%	14.6%
	Other	6,223	390	1.8%	6.3%
	Total	222,763	21,698	100.0%	9.7%
11	White	98,919	4,496	34.9%	4.5%
	African American	23,290	2,396	18.6%	10.3%
	Hispanic	55,434	5,674	44.0%	10.2%
	Other	5,943	328	2.5%	5.5%
	Total	186,291	13,183	100.0%	7.1%
12	White	93,160	5,515	38.6%	5.9%
	African American	21,615	2,460	17.2%	11.4%
	Hispanic	50,586	5,910	41.3%	11.7%
	Other	5,087	421	2.9%	8.3%
	Total	172,735	14,483	100.0%	8.4%
All Grades	White	1,653,456	53,026	30.5%	3.2%
	African-American	469,128	32,994	18.9%	7.0%
	Hispanic	1,147,714	81,914	47.0%	7.1%
	Other	81,128	2,581	1.5%	3.2%
	Total	3,403,905	174,133	100.0%	5.1%

These numbers do not equal reported totals due to students for whom ethnicity is unknown.

As Chart 1 shows, 5.1 percent, or 174,133 students, were retained in grade. Students in special education programs made up 8.8 percent of the total population, or 300,261 students, and 19,600 were retained. The retention rate for students in special education programs was 6.5 percent compared to 4.9 percent for regular education students.

Retention by Grade

As in past years, students in grade 9 had the highest number of retentions with 52,195 students retained, resulting in a 18.7 percent retention rate for this grade. Grade level retention by ethnicity, shown on Pages 8 and 9, indicates, among the elementary grades, retentions were highest in first grade, with 24,124, or 7.9 percent of students retained. This pattern of grade level retention is true for each ethnic group.

The same pattern also holds true for students in special education programs. The greatest number of retentions for students in special education programs occurred at grade 9, with 6,522 students retained for a 22.7 percent retention rate. Among the elementary grades, retentions in grade 1 were the largest, with 3,111 or 12.0 percent of students retained.

Retention by Ethnicity and Gender

Of the 174,133 students retained in 1992-93, Hispanic students made up the largest group, with 81,914 students retained. Grade level retention information on Pages 8 and 9 shows that Hispanics represent 47.0 percent of all retained students. The retention rate for Hispanic students was 7.1 percent in 1992-93, the highest of any ethnic group. With the exception of kindergarten, where over half of all retained students are white, larger numbers of Hispanic students are retained at each grade than students from any other ethnic group.

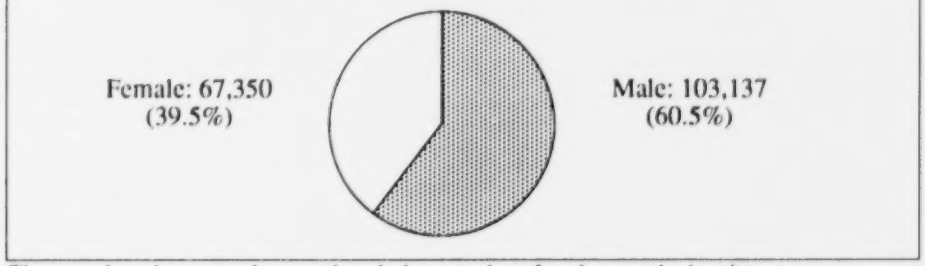
Chart 1. Total Retentions and Retention Rates for All Students and Students in Special Education Programs

	Total Students	Number Retained	Retention Rate
All Students	3,403,905	174,133	5.1%
Regular Education Students	3,103,645	154,533	5.0%
Special Education Students	300,261	19,600	6.5%

Although African American students represent only 18.9 percent of retained students, their retention rate at 7.0 percent is almost as high as that of Hispanic students. White students made up the second largest group of those retained, with 53,026 students, or 30.0 percent of all retained students.

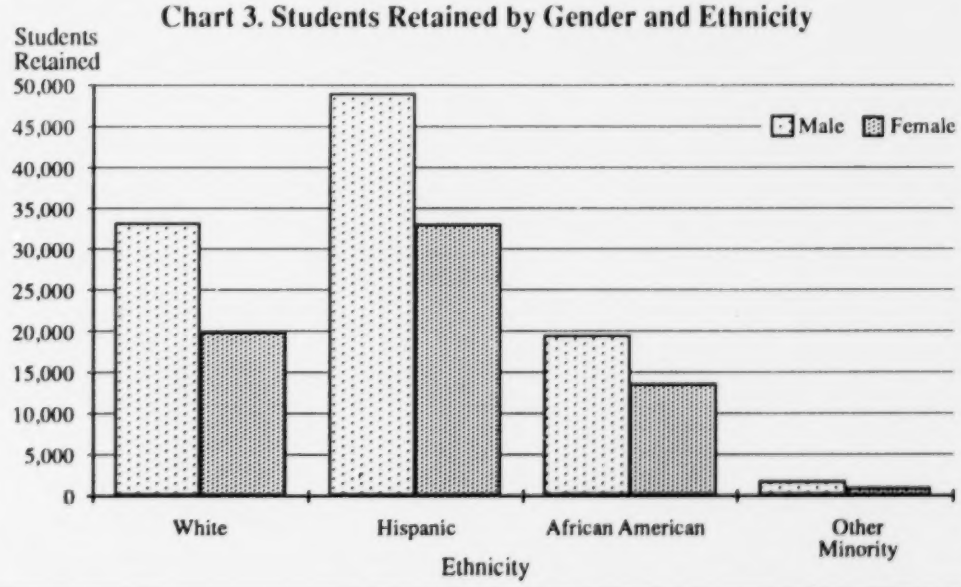
As Chart 2 shows, 60.5 percent of retained students in 1992-93 were male. Males have higher retention rates than females at every grade level, for all students and each ethnic group. The greatest gender gap exists among white students, with 62.5 percent of those retained being male, and 37.5 percent female. As Chart 3 shows, 59.7 percent of Hispanic students retained were male, and 59.1 percent of African American students.

Chart 2. Students Retained by Gender



These numbers do not equal reported totals due to students for whom gender is unknown.

Chart 3. Students Retained by Gender and Ethnicity



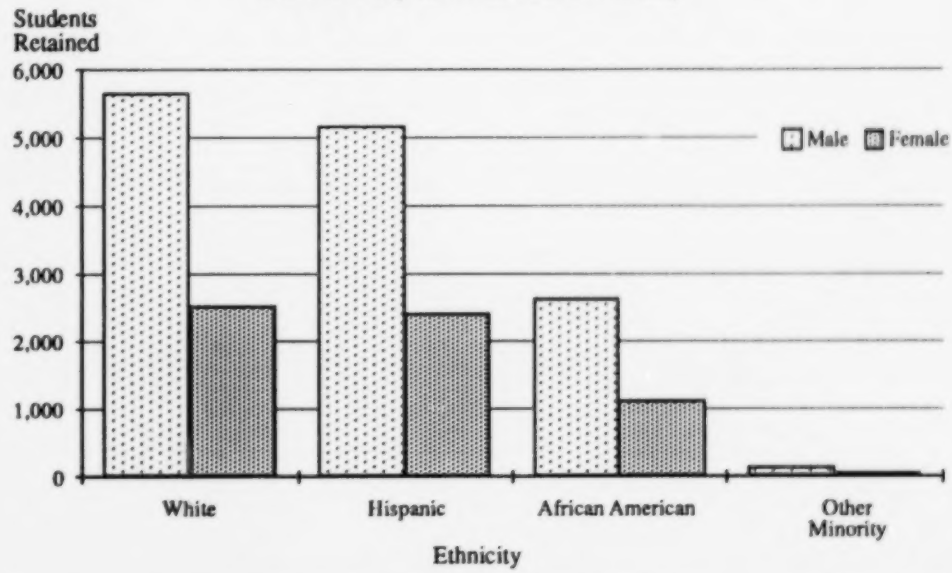
This trend is stronger for students in special education programs, where more than two-thirds of those retained were male. This can be explained by the high participation rate of males in special education programs. Males participate in special education programs at a rate nearly twice that of females. As Chart 4 shows, white males made up the largest group of students in special education programs who were retained, followed by Hispanic males.

Chart 5 shows that the retention rate of students in special education programs within the three largest ethnic groups also follows a pattern similar to that observed with all students. White students represent the largest number of retained students in special education programs, but Hispanic and African American students are retained at a higher rate.

Grade Level Retention and Overage Students

One result of grade level retention is students who are overage for grade. Research has consistently shown that overage students have an increased likelihood of dropping out of school. They also have a greater likelihood than other students of being retained, making them yet another year older than their classmates. Students in special education programs have individual education plans that may not follow a typical grade progression. However, 502,082 or 16.2 percent of all regular education

Chart 4. Students in Special Education Programs Retained by Gender and Ethnicity



students were overage for grade in the 1992-93 school year. Of these students, 41,520, or 8.2 percent, were retained.

Chart 6 on Page 14 shows percent of 1992-93 retained students who were already overage, compared to percent of all students who are overage for grade. Beginning with grade 5, overage students made up a disproportionate number of retained students. At the ninth grade, where the number of both overage students and retentions were highest, 27.0 percent of all students were overage while 41.7 percent of retained students were overage for grade. Percent of retained students who are overage remains very high in grades 10 and 11, with over 30 percent of retained students overage. Although still high, in grade 12 overage students drop to 15.5 percent of retained students. This drop may be explained by the increased likelihood of overage students dropping out of school. By grade 12, only 1.2 percent of all students are overage for grade.

Over 10,000 overage students who were retained in 1992-93 were already two or more years overage. This represents one fourth of all overage students who were retained. Students two or more years overage for grade who were retained were predominantly high school students. About 80 percent of all retained students were in grades 9 - 12, as were 80 percent of retained students who were overage. However, 94 percent of retained students who were two or more years overage were in grades 9 - 12. These data are consistent with research findings that retained students are worse off than their peers who were promoted in terms of academic achievement.

Reasons for Retention

Reasons for retaining students in kindergarten - grade 8, or for placing students in transitional programs, were reported along with the end-of-year promotion/retention

Chart 5. Students in Special Education Programs Retained by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total Students *	Number Retained *	Percent of Total Retentions	Retention Rate
White	151,182	8,162	41.6%	5.4%
Hispanic	95,507	7,544	38.5%	7.9%
African American	50,802	3,722	19.0%	7.3%
Other	2,770	172	0.9%	6.2%

* These numbers do not equal the reported totals due to students for whom ethnicity is unknown.

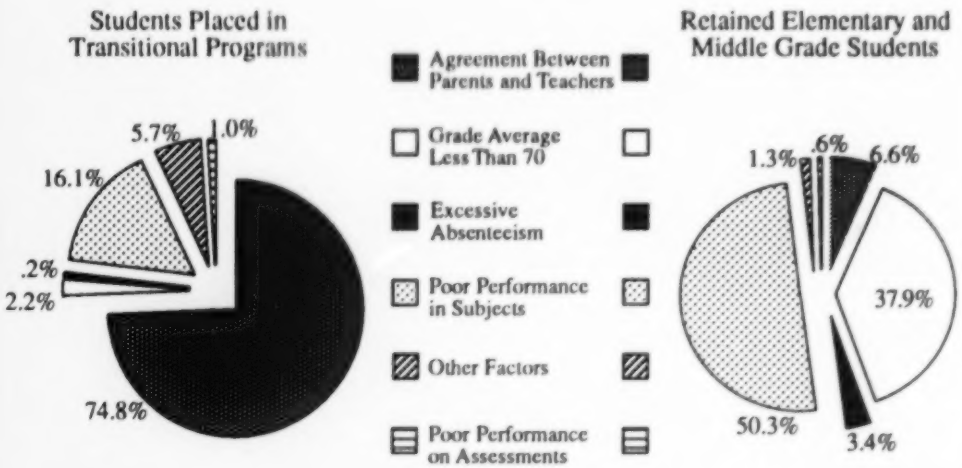
status. As Chart 7 illustrates, the most common reasons given for retaining students in kindergarten - grade 8 were poor performance in one or more subjects or a grade average for the school year of less than 70 on a scale of 100. These two reasons explain the retention decisions for 88.2 percent of students retained in kindergarten - grade 8 at the end of the 1992-93 school year. Other reasons for retention are poor performance on a criterion-referenced and/or norm-referenced assessment instrument, agreement between the student's parents and teachers, disciplinary action, excessive absenteeism, and other factors the district considers important.

Students placed in transitional programs are not counted as retained until the following year when they are placed in a regular program at the same grade level as the transitional program. However, reasons for placing students in transitional programs are of interest. As Chart 7 illustrates, agreement between the student's parents and teachers was the reason most often reported for placing kindergarten - grade 8 students in transitional programs in 1992-93. This explains 74.8 percent of all placements in transitional programs. The other commonly reported reason was poor performance in one or more subjects. These two reasons account for 90.9 percent of the 2,722 students placed in transitional programs.

Chart 6. Regular Education Students Overage and Retained by Grade

Grade	Total Students	Overage Students	Percent of Total Students Overage	Total Retained Students	Overage Retained Students	Percent of Retained Students Overage
K	255,179	6,934	2.7	3,253	37	1.1
1	280,014	27,430	9.8	21,226	294	1.4
2	263,675	35,677	13.5	6,607	343	5.2
3	252,808	40,905	16.2	3,698	273	7.4
4	252,245	44,356	17.6	2,866	360	12.6
5	251,814	45,135	17.9	2,457	544	22.1
6	252,937	49,297	19.5	6,512	2,074	31.8
7	252,428	52,014	20.6	9,712	2,909	30.0
8	235,790	48,911	20.7	6,571	1,443	22.0
9	255,901	69,178	27.0	47,235	19,680	41.7
10	206,342	47,149	22.8	19,851	7,577	38.2
11	173,638	33,091	19.1	11,850	4,023	33.9
12	170,874	2,005	1.2	12,695	1,963	15.5
Total	3,103,645	502,082	16.2	154,533	41,520	26.9

Chart 7. Reasons For Retention and Placement



Trends in Grade Level Retention

It is difficult to identify trends in grade level retention of Texas public school students without a longer history of data collection. Retention information has been collected for only three years, and the timing of the data collection changed after the first year. For the first year of retention data collection, the data were reported by districts in October, based on the end-of-year promotion/retention status from the prior school year. The second year the timing of the data collection was moved to the end of the school year when retention status is determined and information is readily available. The third year of collection, for the 1993-94 school year, is comparable to the second year. Chart 8 shows retention status information collected over the last three years.

Chart 8. Historical Review of Students Retained

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
End of Year Retention Data	118,888	152,508	139,131
Enrollment Comparison Retention Estimates	162,673	174,133	N/A

The first year of data collection, the number of retentions may have been underreported for several reasons. First, students who would have been retained but moved from the school district over the summer are not included in the count. Second, prior year grade level and retention status was not known for many students who moved into the district over the summer. Third, to meet legislative reporting requirements, the retention data were collected without piloting this new Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data reporting requirement; therefore, some districts may have been unclear about the new reporting requirement.

There were an estimated 162,673 students retained at the end of the 1991-92 school year based on a comparison of 1992-92 and 1992-93 enrollment as well as reported retentions. The same enrollment comparison method yields 174,133 retentions in 1992-93, an increase of over 11,000 retentions. Since the end-of-year retention data for 1993-94 show a decrease of 13,000 retentions from 1992-93, it is difficult to determine a true pattern of increase or decrease without subsequent years of retention data.

The gap between preliminary end-of-year reported retentions and the adjusted enrollment comparison retention estimates decreased from 43,000 students in 1991-92 to 21,000 students in 1992-93. This decrease was due in part to the change in timing of the end-of-year retention data collection. The difference between the end-of-year retention status reported by school districts and actual grade-level enrollment the following year may be due in part to student mobility. Although student mobility over the summer has not been explored, the 1993-94 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports that 21.1 percent of students move between campuses during the school year. An end-of-year promotion or retention decision made at one campus may not be carried out at another campus.

Although historical trends in retention information are virtually impossible to identify at this time, the adjusted retention estimate for the 1993-94 school year and the 1994-95 submission of preliminary end-of-year retention data will provide sufficient information to report trends in the next state grade level retention report.

Comparison of 1992-93 and 1993-94 Year-End Retentions

The following charts and tables present comparative information on 1992-93 and 1993-94 grade level retentions. The retention data shown for both years are based on the preliminary retention numbers reported by school districts at the end of the school year. They are not adjusted for actual grade level enrollment the following year because the 1993-94 enrollment data are not yet available. The preliminary 1992-93 and 1993-94 numbers are the only sets of retention data that are comparable across years.

Most of the analyses in this report are based on the 1992-93 adjusted retention numbers and, therefore, are not comparable to the numbers presented here.

Chart 9. Retention by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	1992-93 Number Retained	1992-93 Percent Retained	1993-94 Number Retained	1993-94 Percent Retained	Percent Change in Number Retained
White	45,974	30%	41,495	30%	-10%
Hispanic	72,289	47%	66,889	48%	-7%
African American	31,946	21%	28,523	21%	-11%
Other	2,299	2%	2,224	2%	-4%
Total	152,508	100%	139,131	100%	-9%

Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

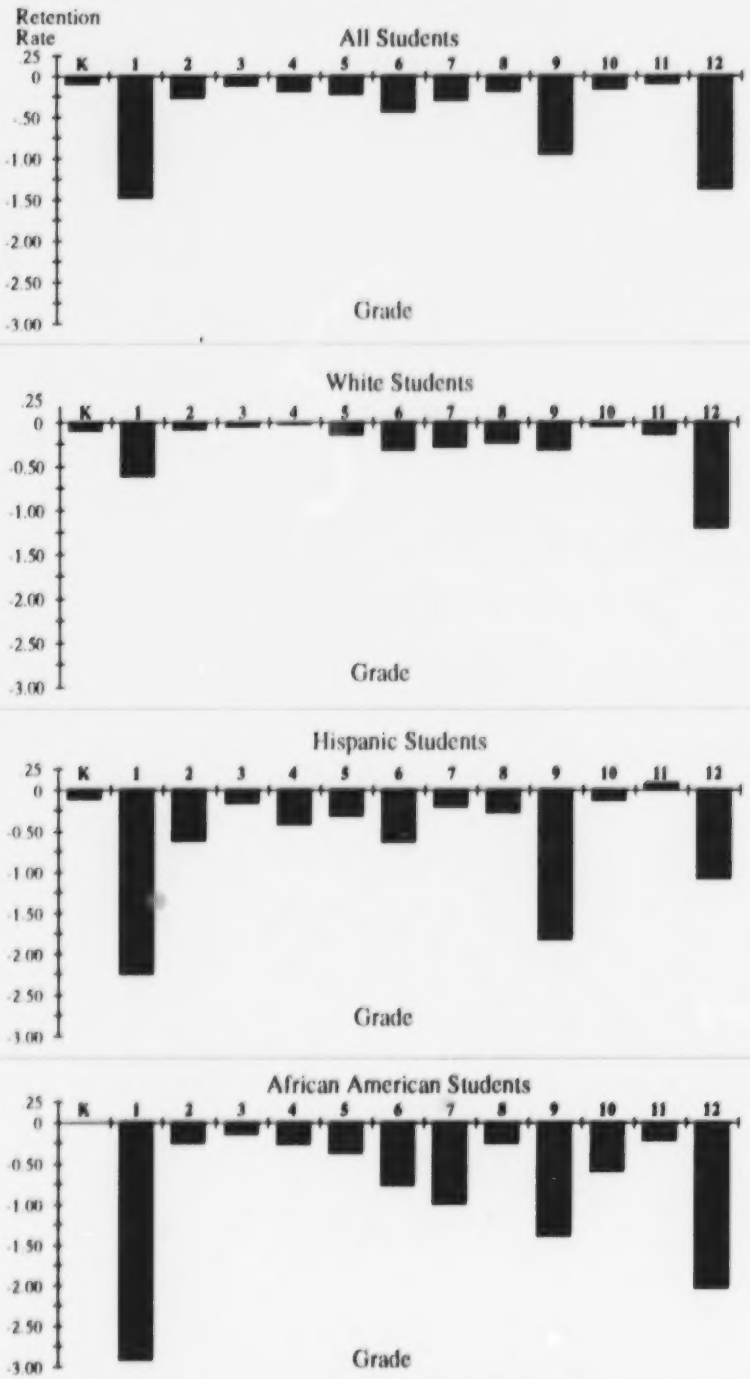
As Chart 9 shows, the total number of students retained decreased from 1992-93 to 1993-94 across all ethnic groups. The largest percent change occurred with African American students, where the number of students retained dropped by 3,423 or 11 percent. With the exception of other students, the smallest percent change occurred with Hispanic students, with a 7 percent decrease. As a result, Hispanic students increased as a percent of all students retained by one percent.

As Chart 10 on Page 18 shows, the greatest change in number of students retained between 1992-93 and 1993-94 occurred at grade 1, where there was a 24 percent decrease in retentions. Large decreases also occurred at grades 5 and 12, with reductions of 22 percent in both grades. Smaller changes in retention occurred at grades 8, 9, and 10, and retentions at grade 11 were almost unchanged.

Chart 10. Retention by Grade				
Grade	**1992-93**	**1993-94**	**Change**	**Percent Change**
Kindergarten	2,519	2,279	-240	-10%
1st	19,901	15,218	-4,683	-24%
2nd	6,028	5,173	-855	-14%
3rd	3,482	3,198	-284	-8%
4th	3,000	2,410	-590	-20%
5th	2,956	2,292	-664	-22%
6th	9,466	8,197	-1,269	-13%
7th	13,506	12,717	-789	-6%
8th	10,004	9,790	-214	-2%
9th	41,795	40,857	-938	-2%
10th	18,045	17,546	-499	-3%
11th	11,131	11,182	51	0%
12th	10,675	8,274	-2,401	-22%

Retention rates are calculated by dividing number of students retained by total students. Retention rates provide a measure that is comparable across grades and racial/ethnic groups of different sizes. As Chart 11 shows, the retention rates within each grade level decreased for all ethnic groups from 1992-93 to 1993-94, except for Hispanic students in the 11th grade, who had a slight increase in retention rate. The largest decreases in retention rates for all ethnic groups were at grades 1, 9, and 12; however, the magnitude of the change differed between groups. For white students, the greatest decrease in retention rate occurred at grade 12. For Hispanic and African American students, the greatest decrease in retention rate occurred at grade 1.

Chart 11. Change in Retention Rates by Grade 1992-93 to 1993-94



As Chart 12 shows, across all ethnic groups about half of the retained students were held back due to poor performance in one or more subjects, the reason most often given for retaining a student in both 1992-93 and 1993-94. A composite grade average for the entire school year of less than 70 on a scale of 100 was the second most common reason for retention. These two reasons explain the retention decisions for almost 90 percent of students retained in kindergarten through grade 8 at the end of the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years.

There was a slight shift between the two most common retention reasons between 1992-93 and 1993-94 — a slight increase (one to five percent) in percent of students retained because of poor performance in one or more subjects and a slight decrease (five or six percent) in those retained due to a grade average below 70.

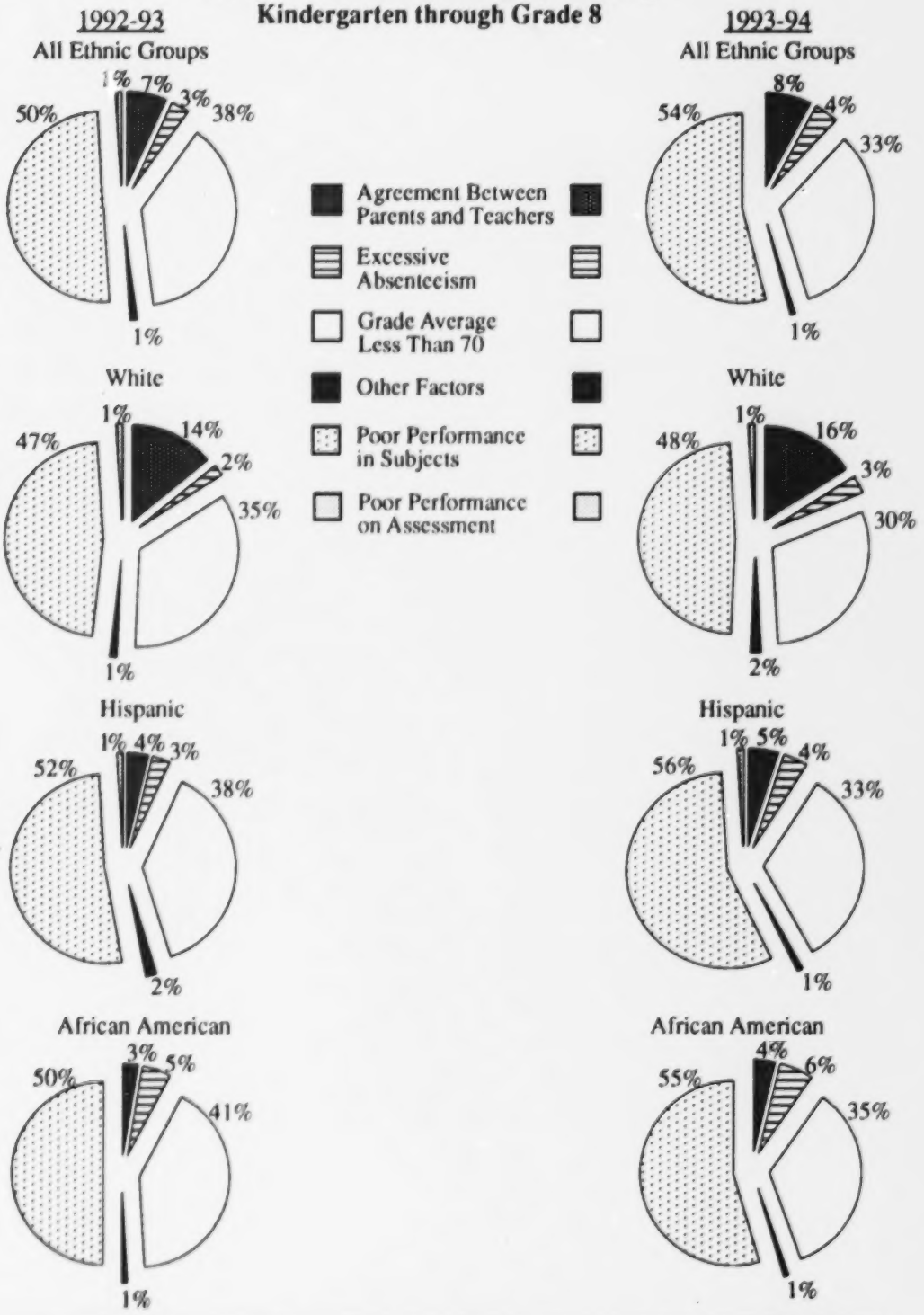
Larger percentages of white students are retained due to agreement between the student's parents and teachers than students from other racial/ethnic groups. This is probably linked to the higher numbers of kindergarten retentions among white students.

Conclusion

There were 174,133 students retained at the end of the 1992-93 school, 5.1 percent of the total population. Nearly 70 percent of the students retained were ethnic minorities. The highest percentage of students retained is in grade 9, the year in which most students drop out of school. The retention rate of students in the first grade is higher than that of any other elementary grade level.

The State Board of Education has continued to encourage instructional and organizational strategies that define alternatives to student retention. Changes in board rules in 1989 and 1991 allowed districts to implement mixed-age and other flexible learning arrangements in the elementary grades, and to grant promotions using ungraded assessment methods for grades below grade 2. In 1993 the board requested a report highlighting the impact of traditional remediation to address the needs of slower learners. The report, *Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs. Remediation and the Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement*, recommended that schools move from remediation to accelerated instruction for those students who might otherwise be retained so all students can graduate on time. The Policy Statement on Early Childhood and Elementary Education advocates instructional practices, organizational arrangements, and staffing patterns to prevent early school failure and assure that no student is retained. *First Impressions*, the 1994 report of the board Task Force on Early Childhood and Elementary Education, also reflected this emphasis on alternatives to retention and presented a series of recommendations for the legislature, board, Texas Education Agency, regional education service centers, school districts, and campuses.

Chart 12. Retention Reasons by Ethnicity
Kindergarten through Grade 8



In 1993, the 73rd Texas Legislature appropriated $10 million for a board supported retention reduction grant program for the 1993-95 biennium. The program allows school districts to pilot extended instructional programs to eliminate retentions in the first and second grade. Also in 1993, the legislature established optional extended year programs for school districts to reduce and ultimately eliminate student retention. SBOE legislative recommendations for the 74th Legislature include the continued provision for state funded extended year programs for students in danger of being retained.

Each of these initiatives specifically addresses concerns related to grade level retention illustrated by the information in this report. The broader focus of the board and agency on student achievement, aimed at eliminating student failure and thereby eliminating retention, is seen in major initiatives in every area. The integrated accountability system is first and foremost designed to improve student performance. The focus of the elementary, middle, and high school networks is improved student achievement through local staff development; retention is particularly an issue for the elementary school network. Teacher and administrator proficiencies adopted by the board describe the skills and knowledge educators need in a learner-centered environment; Centers for Professional Development and Technology are providing innovative approaches to acquiring these skills and knowledge. Regional Education Service Centers have also redirected their efforts from support of administrative functions to support of student achievement. Even the alignment and clarification of the essential elements is being conducted to assure students, teachers, and parents clearly understand what is expected so that students can succeed.

Standard instructional programs have been established for each grade level and students are measured academically against that standard This tradition does not accommodate either students who take longer to master material or those who learn more quickly than the average student. The focus of state policy development in recent years has been on restructuring the school program around the needs of each student.

Selected Bibliography

Texas Administrative Code. Title 19, Part II, Texas Education Agency. (1993) Austin, TX.

Texas Education Agency. *Academic Excellence Indicator System 1993-94 Report.* (1994) Austin, TX: TEA.

Texas Education Agency. *Closing the Gap: Acceleration vs. Remediation and the Impact of Retention in Grade on Student Achievement.* The Commissioner's Critical Issue Analysis Series, Number 1 (1993) Austin, TX: TEA.

Texas Education Agency. *Older is Better, Right? Not Really.* Research Briefs, Issue 91.1 (1991) Austin, TX: TEA.

Texas Education Agency. *Public Education Information Management System Data Standards.* (1993,1994) Austin, TX: TEA.

Texas Education Agency. *State Report on Grade Level Retention of Students as of October 1992.* (1993) Austin, TX: TEA.

Texas Education Agency. *Task Force on the Education of Students with Disabilities Briefing Book.* (1993) Austin, TX: TEA.

Texas Education Code. (1994) Austin, TX.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AS AMENDED; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED; AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990; AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991.

The Texas Education Agency shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all Federal and State laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status or a disability requiring accommodation (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Document Number GE5-601-12
February 1995